WORSHIP

ITS NECESSITY, NATURE AND EXPRESSION

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Author of "Prayer in Christian Theology."

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Student Christian Movement

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PREFACE

RELIGION as a factor in human history has in recent years become an object of scientific investigation on something like the grand scale. There are those who hold that this widespread interest in religion as a historical reality points to and is in fact preparing a general renewal of the religious sense. Yet worship, the most spontaneous and natural expression of genuine religious feeling, tends to be in theory misunderstood and in practice neglected—perhaps more especially by those whose anxiety for truth in religious profession is most scrupulous and sincere. Accordingly it seems most pertinent to present needs to consider, first, what roots in ordinary human nature the instinct of worship actually has, and then the essential character of worship itself and its most universal modes of expression. In this little book, therefore, I make no attempt to treat the subject from the point of view of the liturgiologist, but confine myself rigidly to a con-

sideration of the general principles which underlie and fruitfully regulate all sincere human aspiration towards the Divine—the worship of God who is Spirit in spirit and in truth. For such a method of treatment I have at least the magnificent example and the inspiring guidance of St Thomas Aquinas. For him and for his age, indeed, worship had not to suffer from the existing tension between scientific belief and religious feeling. Recent attempts to revive the spirit and practice of worship have sometimes turned deliberately from what is most living in contemporary thought, sometimes sought guidance in writers, of profound spiritual insight indeed but fundamentally distrustful of the rôle of the intellect in matters of religious faith, like Dr Otto of Marburg. Much as I appreciate the labours of such contemporaries in the cause of a worshipping religion, I still think that in the spirit and method of St Thomas we shall find the truer guide, and that religion will again flourish only as belief and worship can become sincerely reconciled.

Worship was the title of a course of lectures which I delivered at Cambridge last August in connection with a Vacation Term for Biblical

Study. In the slightly revised form in which they now appear, these lectures may be regarded as a kind of pendant to my *Prayer in Christian Theology*, published a year ago by the Student Christian Movement.

A. L. L.

December 31, 1925

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WORSHIP

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I

THE NECESSITY OF WORSHIP

THERE seems to be growing up on all hands an as yet vague belief that worship may not be after all a permanent human need, that it is already becoming a kind of residual habit rather than the expression of a genuine and imperative feeling, and that therefore those who have deliberately abandoned it are on the whole the more single-eyed and sincere. There is a tendency to think that even the devout, much more the ordinary worshipper, must be suffering from the "lie in the soul." Further, all this kind of loose feeling is being encouraged by the undoubted fact that the only value which so many people attach to worship is an incidental and not an inherent one, the value, viz., which it is supposed to have as a social cement or a social lubricant. In certain

countries, as for instance in France, worship is encouraged and patronised by certain groups on the sole ground that it is a bond of the national tradition. The leaders of the *Action Française* hold that France can only be saved by a restoration of Seventeenth Century royalty, and that royalty can only be revived in a France which has generally returned to its old tradition of Catholic worship. And what is most freakish in this programme of national renewal is that it is vehemently commended and indeed organised into a national crusade by men who claim to be Catholics while openly and even contemptuously rejecting the whole sum of Christian belief. In England, of course, such daring feats of intellectual legerdemain are impossible, because we are both a duller race and, perhaps just on that account, a race with sounder political instincts. Yet in England also the same belief that the public exercises of religion must be preserved for the sake of their calming effects upon a tumultuary populace is neither unknown nor uninfluential.

But apart from an attitude whose religious unworthiness it is unnecessary to underline, there is in our time among serious and even

earnestly religious souls grave hesitation as to the use of religious symbols at all, or else as to what kind of religious symbolism is most appropriate or least insincere. On the one hand, there is a tendency to let the life of righteous action stand on its own feet and subsist by virtue of its own earnestness, or at least to reduce the traditional elements of worship to the meditation of a Quaker silence. On the other hand, many find refuge in pure symbolism. The hard outlines of formulated statement, whether in creed or in sermon or even in spoken prayer, wound the tender and shrinking surface of spirits touched indeed with religious feeling but incapable of becoming fixed in religious belief. All the intellectual side of religion is to them such an offence that they are ready to decree a permanent divorce between religion and reason. The more elaborate symbolism becomes, the more capable of varied and fantastic meanings or even the more defiant of all obvious meaning, the more likely is it to satisfy the mood of their religious need.

It is not perhaps wonderful that in such an age the most intelligent observers should feel that since religious custom is everywhere dis-

integrating or else consciously hardening itself in local centres of obstinate resistance to the menace of disintegration, worship itself as a living necessity of man's spirit is disappearing also. Worship, for all its rootedly individual quality, has always been a pre-eminently social fact. It has been the expression of a social conscience, and at the same time has nourished that conscience. Its practically unchanging social form and its unimpeded power of social influence have been the secret and the continued guarantee of its unquestioned vitality and force in the soul of the individual. Fifty years ago everyone was born into the worshipping unit of the family and was therefore born and brought up a worshipper. The religious capacity of each of course varied, but none escaped or could escape altogether the religious influences of a human world whose very atmosphere was worship. And worship was not only hereditary, a possession into which each new generation entered whole, without perceptible reduction for death-duties. It was also uniform and, as we say, objective. It was something practically universal in which the individual was rooted. And just on that account he possessed it and was possessed by

it with an infinitely greater force than if it had been individual in the sense of being created or modified by the individual whim. But now all that is changed. The family is no longer a religious, much less a worshipping unit. There may be as many forms of religious belief, as many modes of worship, in the family as it has individual members. There are some who hold that this is a source of religious strength and sincerity. A source of religious sincerity it may be for the moment, of religious strength perhaps also after a fashion, but certainly not of the kind of religious strength which naturally perpetuates itself and plants itself with a natural and unconscious vigour in the heart of the individual. Religion is most individual just when it is an unquestioned and unselfconscious social force. Then its sole function is to bring its whole force to bear upon each individual soul so as to make it as religious as it can become. The religion which has grown out of an individual fantasy feels its own weakness and in its confusion keeps proclaiming the need of a social religion which it is engaged in destroying and which it has no power to reconstruct. That is very largely our case

to-day, and that is the reason that worship seems to be dying out among us.

But religion will not die, because it is an imperative need of man's nature. It has passed through these stages of apparent dissolution before only to rise again in a renewed and more vigorous life. Humanity, because it is of God, has never wanted and will never want its prophets to call it back to Him. The prophet will come as he has always come in due time. But it is not of his coming that I am now to speak, but of that in man to which when he does come he will appeal and which his appeal will once more rouse into vigorous action. He will find there first of all, ready to respond to his appeal, the same sense of the importance of the unseen as compared with the whole visible order which has always been the deepest and most characteristic instinct in man. And that instinct is the very nerve of worship. The order in the midst of which we live familiarly, which fills up with all its varied tints of interest and emotion the whole foreground of our existence, becomes somehow unimportant to us when we see it for a moment against a background which only faith supplies or can supply.

In that background, invisible save to the eye of faith, suddenly all importance centres. It explains, upholds, redeems all that is confused, inconstant, wayward in our experience. In the foreground our reason labours to evolve some significance for our deepest and most permanent selves in such order as we can find in the universe and in our necessary relations with it. And for the most part, it labours in vain. It falls back defeated so often that the temptation to become altogether sceptical as to the rationality of the universe is with us great and insistent. It may be, we are inclined to think at times, that it is all nothing more than the accidental play of blind forces of which we are the puppets and the dupes. But some fundamental sanity in us intervenes to save us from thinking thus brainsickly of things, persuades us that our reason, however confused and imperfect its methods, however unsatisfying and even self-stultifying its results may often appear to be, is yet the legitimate offspring of a Supreme, an Eternal and Perfect Reason, in which and through which all things subsist. It is our belief in that background of absolute Reason that alone gives sanity, meaning, purpose to all our experience.

Again the foreground of life is a scene of the most baffling moral confusion. It is not only that we human souls are careless about the clearly-known distinctions of right and wrong, that we thoughtlessly stake upon the wayward issues of some passing attraction, of some momentary advantage or pleasure, the sterling coin that has been minted in the general conscience of humanity as if it were only so many worthless counters. That moral levity in ourselves and in the whole world of men about us is a sufficient stumbling-block to the soul that would preserve its native eagerness for right. But there is something more perplexing still. It is that so often the way of right is not clear at all, that in the court of conscience no clear and unequivocal verdict is obtainable on matters which most urgently demand our unhesitating judgment. There are cases where we must decide in order to act, and yet where every possible decision entails some injury to others which we should have desired to avoid and yet which cannot be avoided. The only difference between one decision and another is a difference in the direction of the injury, a difference in the persons on whom it must fall. And what

a long-drawn moral agony life would be if this foreground were its all, if faith did not perceive an eternal background of immutable right which inspires, upholds, and leads to a blessed completion our faultiest, if faithful, gropings and endeavours after right.

Or, again, the play of the affections is all-important for man. It may be said that by them our distinctively human life is constituted. Yet here again is nothing but imperfection, disappointment, confusion. Our affections are so often betrayed by their own short-sighted eagerness. They are undisciplined and inconstant or become encroaching and tyrannical. From being the salt of life they may easily become its poison, from the means of its purification the cause of its putrefaction. Or they may simply die away and leave us the mere husks of men, soulless and solitary in a loveless world. But here, again, faith perceives an eternal background of Heart, perfect in its self-giving because perfect in its understanding of, its respect for, its belief in those to whom it gives itself. And that faith restores all its importance to our affections. The background to life which it perceives becomes a guarantee and

a fulfilment of worth in their most wayward play.

Now, apart from this belief in an eternal Reason, Goodness, Love, our lives would altogether lack perspective, significance, importance. But these are the very things which by an inner necessity they demand and must have. Faith may change its forms, but the essence of the faith that these things exist remains. And in that faith are included all the elements and motives of worship—wonder, reverence, awe, love, the need of satisfaction. There may be other elements in worship, but these at least are essential to it. And all these are essential to our very nature. The sense of mystery, for instance, is not merely provoked by the infinite wonder of the world without us. It is already deeply seated within. We are a constant and an inexhaustible mystery to ourselves. And that mystery, both within and without, is not lessened but heightened and increased by such knowledge of process as we can obtain. Our knowledge which promised to eliminate wonder is but the light which reveals a greater depth and intensity in the mist of wonder. We are just beginning to feel that if we could know all

we should have reached the point at which mystery had become infinite. For every analysis of quantity by which we explain things leads us into the presence of a quality which resists all analysis and all explanation, which just mysteriously is. And as it is in some qualitative state that we know ourselves and through it that we know everything else, we take with us in our search for knowledge that which we always ultimately find—mystery. And seeing that this is our native human state the instinct of worship will never die out in us for lack of its due nourishment of wonder.

But further, for us the object of wonder always tends to become personal. We invest it with personal or quasi-personal qualities. We adopt towards it a personal or quasi-personal attitude. Science in its more severe and academic mood may be satisfied with pure abstractions. But even science has at times almost poetic moods when in spite of itself it personifies even its own abstractions. It " capitalises " Law and Energy and Force and speaks of them with the reverence due to exalted personages. And poetry itself is, of course, the supreme instance of man's need at the highest level of his experience not only

to personalise its objects but even to invest them with a halo of reverence. And though the poet himself may be rare, the feeling for poetry is practically universal among men. It is not only or even principally the beauty of form which appeals to the average in poetry, but that strange beauty of substance which consists above all in the attitude of reverence with which it approaches and apprehends life. We do not, I think, take sufficient account of the significance for religion and all the higher life of man of this almost universal feeling for the personal imagery of poetic diction.

Again reverence develops into awe. There is indeed implicit in all reverence a note of awe without which it is not yet fully reverence. But when that note becomes explicit, awe gains the power of subsisting by itself. We can never mistake the parentage of the feeling we call awe, so unmistakably does the specific nature of reverence persist in it. Yet it has too its own quite peculiar and incommunicable character, a character more easily defined in terms of the nature which evokes it than by any and every attempt to analyse the impression received. We understand at once Kant's saying that two things filled him with

awe—the starry heavens and the fact of conscience in man. . It is power and sublimity that produce awe, power and sublimity as one, the sublimity of power as distinguished from its mere vastness or magnitude. Now the impression produced by the sublime is, as Burke acutely pointed out, a kind of delight, but a delight, as he added, which "turns on pain," which arises out of the idea of pain and danger when we are not in circumstances that entail either. That specific kind of delight is awe. And it is man's peculiar privilege to experience it. Without some actual experience of it he would not be quite man. And it is an experience which purifies, which enriches and ennobles man's spirit so as to lift it into a something more than man, in contrast with the fear whose immediate effect is to debase and as we say to unman his spirit. To return to Kant's experience, it is easy to see, because we all probably share his feeling, how appropriate is his ascription of awe to the effect made upon us as we gaze upwards in a still clear night upon the vast silent canopy of heaven studded with its myriads of stars, mere scintillating points of flame which we yet know to be worlds immeasurably greater

than our own. Everything there is sublime in Burke's sense—the silence, the immensity, the majestic beauty, last but not least, the contrast for the gazer between the appearance and the vaguely-known but strictly inconceivable reality. And the effect is, as Burke put it, delight turning on pain. Imagination is enlarged even while it quails. It is the purifying sense of awe. But perhaps it is not so easy to enter into Kant's feeling about the human conscience. Yet there I am certain that his description of his feeling as awe is still more appropriate and is equally shareable by us all. For conscience is the one fact which reveals immensity within us, and reveals it as a kind of divine menace which yet braces, strengthens, ennobles. We cannot think of that divine judgment planted at the very centre of our being, our very central and constitutive self sitting in continuous judgment on all the partial selves of our momentary purposes and actions, without a sense of awe which ought itself to be continuous. With the really alert and sensitive conscience it is so. For the saints the perfect sublime has been within, and they have ceaselessly contemplated it to their own increasing ennoble-

ment of spirit with the delight that turns on pain.

As to love, it might seem hardly necessary to inquire into the nature of its value as a motive of worship. But it may at least be well to consider the nature of its function in the economy of human life. It is through the affective instincts that we know one another at all, that we are able to enlarge ourselves into a knowledge of any experience beyond our own. Reason, of course, enters into such knowledge, but it is reason informed already by some degree of affection. Of this we can be certain if only because of the fact that when reason has done its best to give us knowledge of others, affection is still needed to give that knowledge concreteness and reality. Indeed, the fact that we know each other at all seems to prove that we are constituted with a power of divining the secrets of experience in those to whom we are drawn near in spirit apart from and beyond our power of communicating those secrets to one another by words or other outward symbols. Now it is in virtue of this power of spiritual divination, which is both the essence of affection and its supreme result, that human society is

possible. There is no need to ignore the motives of reasoned interest which may have operated to the formation, and certainly operate to the development, of human societies. But it is beyond all question that the germ of society, the family, needed no motives of reason to come into being and that none were needed to keep it in being. And we are being forced by bitter experience to recognise that even the most fully developed society cannot now be kept in being by the action of purely rational motives. We are being taught that purely affective instincts are in this region more powerful than reason, and that the most rational constitution of society if it is not informed by love may at least be wrecked by hate. The power of the affective element in man is taking its sinister revenge upon us for our criminal neglect of it. The truth is that this social instinct is so much with us always, it is so much a necessary condition of our very existence, that we have almost lost sight of its essential quality of mystery. We have over-rationalised it for the sake of its use and convenience. And now for very convenience sake we are being forced again to recognise that it needs education along its own natural lines.

As a mystery, we must import into it once more, or rather we must rediscover in it, the wonder, the reverence, the awe which its real nature claims and which we owe to its nature in us. We shall then find once again that it is the most universal and can be one of the most widely-operative motives to worship in man.

But, again, man needs satisfaction, and in this need the great Christian writers have always found a motive powerful to the reverential quest of God. Both St Augustine and St Thomas have rigorously analysed the conception of blessedness and have left as a legacy to all later Christian theology the profoundly true teaching that man's ultimate blessedness is not some gift of God other than Himself, but the gift of His very self. As grace was conceived theologically to be the impartation to man by God of His own nature, so blessedness is the consummation of grace, the completed impartation to man of the divine nature. And both these great theologians, too, have found in man's aimless dissatisfaction with himself, in his most confused and wrong-headed quest of satisfaction, not the mere proof that man needed God but a real quest of God. In that man was seeking happiness he

was seeking God. And the education of man's spirit was through the stern and relentless schooling of the experience that the pursuit of a false satisfaction led to a profounder dissatisfaction with self. There was no rest, no satisfying fulfilment for the spirit of man, till it found its natural and predestined rest in God. Here, therefore, there was ample recognition of the mystical character of man's desire for satisfaction. In whatever direction he was pursuing satisfaction, he was seeking a nature beyond his own which was yet the fulfilment of his own. If he pursued a false satisfaction, it was still God, the mystical beyond, he was pursuing, though through a false conception of God's nature. The very sensualist's pursuit of happiness was still an act of worship, if a perverted one, a homage to the beyond, if an unconscious one. For in the desire of satisfaction man pathetically and mystically expresses his eternal sense of dependence. Here, again, instinct is rooted in mystery and becomes, therefore, the vehicle and instrument of the mystical. All the religious rites that man has ever devised, however gross and fantastic their character, have been rooted in this profoundly mystical con-

viction that the only real reality was beyond the horizon of man's utmost possibilities and powers, was in a nature other than his own. In his felt dependence man is always religious and he always worships. And in the truth of that worship he finds his reward. For it brings him a sense of quasi-independence, of completeness of spirit, of inner reconciliation. This is to the religious man the true gift of God, the assurance that he is no longer merely himself, that he has entered into communion with the beyond, and that that communion has been effected because the reality of the beyond has come to him even while he was as he thought ineffectually seeking to approach to it. Nay, more, he knows now, like Pascal, that he could not have been truly seeking after God at all if God had not already found him. It is God in us that guides us along the true path that leads to Him beyond, as it is God in us that prays when we pray aright, that upholds us in our ascent to Him.

These then are the constant elements in man's nature which make him, in some degree or other, naturally a worshipper, and which justify us in believing that the instinct for worship will never die out in him. Rather,

I think, we may hold that in every great moment of religious change some more adequate mode, some profounder spirit, of worship is being prepared. But those who have to live through such moments may well find it difficult to discover any real grounds for this confidence. To them it must seem as if religion itself were disappearing in the disintegration of its ancient social tradition. For religion, if the most individual of possessions, is also always socially mediated. Society is the most universal and the most inclusive of human sacraments. Hence the value to religion of tradition, which is just the social form of its belief, the social embodiment of its spirit. And to the body belongs especially fixity of form in worship. So long as the religious tradition is secure, the form of worship may indeed develop, but it develops unconsciously. There is no surer sign of religious unrest than anxiety about forms of worship. When that anxiety becomes acute, it means that already the disintegration of traditional belief is far advanced. There are those for whom the old beliefs have become so doubtful that they are no longer able to use the forms of worship in which they were

expressed. They may be feeling out towards more adequate and satisfying religious statements, but as their quest of these is necessarily individual and experimental, and as worship is a product of slow social growth, they have as yet no form of worship to express their modified belief, and so they seem less religious than they are. Others again continue to use the old worship with a painful sense of strain and unreality. Still others find refuge from an intellectual hesitation from which they shrink in fear in a more sedulous exaltation of worship, in a cultivation of it almost for its own sake. All these are symptoms not of the impending disappearance of religion but of its profound consciousness of the need of renewal. They are symptoms which remind us that religion is healthy only when the harmony of belief and worship is unquestioned and secure, and that every disharmony, every want of correspondence, between them is the occasion and the cause of at least a deep-seated spiritual *malaise*.

II

THE OBJECT OF WORSHIP

Worship, as we have seen, is a natural instinct in man. Indeed, it may be described as his supremely constitutive instinct. Through its cultivation he becomes not only fully himself, but also a something more than himself. For in some sense he becomes one with the object of his worship. It is just on that account that it matters in such a super-eminent degree what he worships. And the Christian religion especially has always evinced a noble jealousy about the object of its worship. The heir of Jewish monotheism, it has held that God alone in His own essential being is the true and proper object of worship. It has jealously maintained that the honour paid to the memory of saintly souls who have entered into their glory, the invocation of their assistance, was not worship in the fullest sense. It has not hesitated to brand such honour, when it seemed to usurp to itself the

character of divine worship, as idolatry. "The true devotion to the Blessed Virgin and the Saints," says Bossuet, "is such as persuades us to submit ourselves to God after their example, and with them to seek the true good by the practice of the Christian virtues of which they were a perfect model." Bossuet indeed is not afraid to expose the interested motives which may induce to adoration of the saints, and even to that adoration as a substitute for the worship of God. He boldly accuses the false devout of his own day of deliberately abandoning prayer to God because they know that His will cannot be bent to their interested desires, and of having recourse to the saints instead who they hope may be more easily overpersuaded. Here is a passage from a sermon of his on devotion to the Blessed Virgin. "If we dare not hope to turn God according to the changing fashion of our desires, we think we can more easily bend the Blessed Virgin and the Saints to our will by dint of flattering them with our praises or wearying them with the importunity of our prayers. Do not think that I am exaggerating. We treat the saints as ordinary men whom we think to gain over easily to our side by a certain punctuality and

assiduity in trifling services to them. And we do not consider that they are divine men who have entered, as David says, into the power of the Lord, *i.e.*, into the interests of His glory, the sentiments of His justice and His jealousy against sinners, as well as into those of His kindness and mercy."

These words, far better than any which I could use, indicate the kind of perversion to which this noblest faculty in man is subject. His most disinterested instinct, it may be made an instrument of his most unworthy and interested desires. Far from ascending out of himself by its means he would use it to induce the heavenly powers to connive at the indulgence of his own lowest self. "Corruptio optimi pessima." But apart altogether from such extreme instances of perversion, worship is by its very nature exposed to the dangers of idolatry. For in some sense it always makes its object. The gibe that man makes God in his own image is in and for worship more true than we usually realise or allow for. That is the essential truth of the saying so common in the great Christian teachers that we can only pray aright when God prays in us. If we are in worship, in prayer, nothing more than

our own phenomenal selves, the object of our worship will be nothing more than our own phenomenal selves magnified and invested with a halo of false glory. Since we are really obeying the instinct of worship, we shall indeed still be aspiring towards an apparently greater than ourselves. But it is only our own Brocken shadow cast on the background of the infinite to which we are aspiring. And such self-deceiving aspiration is the substance of idolatry. From it our actual idolatries in their protean forms proceed.

Now as corrective to this inveterate tendency in us the Christian theologian has prescribed two things as universally necessary—a right belief about God and a right love of God, or perhaps I ought to say only one, a right belief informed by a right love. Those requirements of a true worship he has, as I have said already, consistently represented as themselves the gift of God. They are effects of grace, of the impartation of the divine nature. But that nature is not imparted to us magically. It comes as a response to some real authentic movement of nature, and operates in and through our actual concrete natures. And, therefore, the right belief in

God and the right love of God must grow out of nature and along the lines of nature. They can and must be cultivated. They are the result of a right direction of our wills and affections. And again the Christian theologian has never held that our belief in God can be wholly adequate, or our love of Him wholly unmotived by love of ourselves. Indeed, he has generally held, and, I think, in strict justice correctly, that the love of God even at its purest is still rooted subconsciously in love of ourselves.

Let us think, then, first of the love of God as a condition of true worship, as a means of possessing the true object of worship. Now here, at first sight, it may seem as if we are indulging in a self-defeating inversion of relations. It is surely the possession of the true object of worship which enables us to love it. It is surely necessary to know God in order that we may love Him. And this, let me repeat it, the Christian theologian has always affirmed. It is God in us, God already possessed by us, that loves God. But that kind of intuitive knowledge of God inspires love and grows on to its perfection only through love. How does anyone become an

object of our love? Some immediate divination of something attractive in character has stirred in us the delighted response of our whole being which becomes the key to a deeper and fuller knowledge of that character than without it we ever could have gained. It is love that supremely enables and acquires knowledge of persons. What, then, is it that we recognise in God which calls forth the right love of Him and so enables the right knowledge of Him? What is the nature of that love of God which will ensure our worship against the danger of idolatry? The theologians of the classical age called it an intellectual love, and what they meant gets near, I think, to the truth of the matter. They meant that the very idea of God was for us the achieved reality of all perfections, and that we had such a natural thirst for perfection that to contemplate it as achieved, as really existing and existing for us, was our supreme delight and our highest inspiration. And this divine perfection was, above all, for us a moral perfection, the perfection of goodness. And the delight in that perfection was the source and substance of our true life. To delight in goodness for its own sake, to delight

in it as the utterly satisfying in spiritual achievement and essence, was to gain the power of goodness. Thus the love of God which man could truly feel, and by which alone he could grow spiritually, was an intellectual love, the contemplation of the divine perfections through which his whole being attached itself to those perfections and found its true satisfaction in them.

This, then, is the conception of the love of God which has consistently obtained in Christian theology and been commended to the faithful of every degree by those to whom the Church has entrusted the task of spiritual direction. It could be and needed to be trained, educated, disciplined, for it was primarily contemplation, an intellectual act. But it was also accompanied by delight and satisfaction and issued in a real communion, and, therefore, it could be properly called love. And it was from the due training of this partly intellectual, partly affective attitude that right belief came—that right belief which gave worship its true object and saved it from the peril of idolatry. Now the importance of this conception for religion can hardly be exaggerated. Through it Christian belief has

acquired a character of inwardness which attaches to belief in no other religion in anything like the same degree. But in speaking of its inwardness I do not mean that it is merely subjective and individual. On the contrary, it is really given to us. Just as grace is a real communication of the Divine, so the knowledge of God, the right belief about God, is a real divine revelation. But also as grace is the communication of the divine nature to an already receptive human nature and grows as that receptiveness is humanly trained and cultivated, so the right belief is a revelation only to the mind and will ardently disposed to receive it and grows in clearness and certainty only through the due training of that disposition. Thus religious belief has an intensely inward character and quality, and grows through the life of the human spirit not only in formal correctness but in substantial richness and depth.

We ought, therefore, to be prepared, seeing that the human spirit is a thing of growth, for intellectual change in the conception of God even within the ambit of right belief. And such change there has been in the history of Christianity, with corresponding effect upon

the character of Christian worship. It is with the nature of some of those changes that I would now attempt to deal. Now there are two things which determine every conception of God which we can form. One is the need of conceiving Him in relation to the whole universe as we know it. We are simply incapable of conceiving God otherwise than in some kind of inclusive relation to all that is or can possibly be. And the second is, that we must necessarily conceive of God through what we think to be most fundamental in ourselves. Our anthropology, in the old theological use of the term as distinguished from our modern scientific use of it, determines our theology. For the mediæval theologian, for instance, man was most closely related to God through the reason, through the speculative and practical intellect. There alone had the authentic impress of the divine image survived the Fall. The will and the affections were subject to all the perturbations of passion. The intellect could not indeed altogether escape the baneful influence of that region of diseased and errant nature with which it was so closely associated. It was in perpetual danger of perversion by its evil suggestions. But at least it was capable

of rising above the confusing mists of passion into the clear air of speculative truth. It was, too, through the reason that man perceived the good. The same law by which the Divine Providence sustained the universal order and directed it to its end of perfection was written in the mind of man as the law of nature. Man's reason, indeed, being derived and imperfect could not embrace the fullness and perfection of the divine reason. It could not comprehend the full reason of that eternal law which guided the Divine Providence in its timeless operations. None the less the law of nature was the temporal and human copy of that law, and it was in virtue of his reason, which was a participation in the divine reason, that man knew its dictates and was able to obey them. It was inevitable, therefore, that the Middle Age should think of God pre-eminently as the Eternal and Perfect Mind. And since it was the perfection of mind to know truth perfectly so that, at their highest, Mind and Truth, the Knower and the Known, were one, God came to be the Supreme and Eternal Reason eternally contemplating itself as the Eternal and Perfect Truth. That intellectual contemplation of Himself was further the love

with which God loved Himself as the only perfect object of love.

Now it may be supposed that a conception so remote from all our ordinary anthropomorphic picturings of God was necessarily confined to a few theologians of a specially philosophic habit of mind. But it was not so at all. The conception, on the contrary, dominated all pure theology, Catholic or Protestant, till at least the end of the Seventeenth Century, as indeed it does in the Roman schools till this day. But, what is much more important, it guided and inspired all meditation, all thought about God in worship and for the purposes of worship. Of a very simple-hearted and simple-minded saint like Vincent de Paul his contemporary biographer, Abelly, the celebrated Bishop of Rodez, can write quite naturally: "The greatest and most intimate joy of his heart was to think of the incomprehensible glory which God possesses in Himself, of the ineffable love with which He loves Himself, of the infinite perfections which are contained within the unity and the simplicity of His divine essence."

Again the Middle Age had none of the difficulty which we feel in relating God to

the whole universe of things. Both as Creator and as Providence He was the very principle of its being. He was present to it and to every least portion of it at every moment in the plenitude of His essence and of His power. The withdrawal of His presence from it would mean its instant dissolution into nothingness. The absence of any real knowledge of process, whether physical or biological, no doubt facilitated this belief in God's immediate and intimate relation to the universe. It had none of the difficulties to overcome with which we are familiar. But this privileged ignorance of scientific difficulties did not interfere with its value as essential truth. The belief in God which it made possible was a right belief, a belief which secured that worship should have its true object.

But already at its highest point of influence the mediæval conception of God was showing signs of decay. Already in Duns Scotus, and much more pronouncedly in Ockham and Biel, the trust in reason was beginning to yield. The Eternal Law which had been conceived of by St Thomas as the expression of the Divine Reason was now explained rather as the mandate of God's sovereign will. God

Himself for the later schoolmen was coming to be the wielder of an arbitrary authority, One who possessed and exercised "summum dominium," the rights of sovereign ownership. Will was beginning to be exalted above reason, and the Divine Law was now good because ordered by God's sovereign authority, not because God's Reason had approved it as *the* essential good of His own nature, and, therefore, as the essentially true and necessary law. With these beginnings of a new kind of speculation, the discovery of new worlds, the call to new fields and new types of adventure, concurred to heighten the importance of the will in man and to challenge the sovereignty which reason still claimed. Gradually it began to be recognised that there was a kind of creative character in the will, and, therefore, that it was through the will that man drew closest to God and that his nature most resembled God's nature. The reason was still further discredited by the growing disclosure of its failure to answer ultimate questions, until with the triumph of the critical philosophy of Kant its bankruptcy in the field of religion was openly declared.

Kant's demonstration of the inability of the

speculative reason to prove the existence of God, and his claim that the existence and nature of God were abundantly revealed through the moral sense, brought to a conclusion the process of change which had its vague beginnings in the speculations of the Fifteenth Century. And with this change in the conception of what was most akin to the Divine in human nature, the accent changed in the conception of God from His reason to His moral goodness. He had become the Supreme Legislator and Judge of humanity. But it was now much more difficult to relate Him to the world. The universe might be reasonable, it might disclose an even majestic order, but in what possible sense could it be called good, what most elementary intelligence of or interest in moral goodness could be traced in its constitution? The most that could be said of it was that it was a school of moral discipline for the spirit of man. And so, especially for Protestant theology and devotion during the Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Centuries, it was generally represented. God had become a moral schoolmaster and the universe was His ferule. It was again a right belief, sufficient to provide a true object of

worship. But it must be admitted that it was a necessarily bare and stark version of the right belief, and it need not be surprising if under its direction worship lost much of its inspiration of beauty and delight.

But already a new conception of what was fundamental in human nature was beginning to urge its claims. The individualism which had resulted from the exaltation of will was reaching a stage where it must defeat its own highest ends. Having inspired and fostered with a signal success the sterner and stronger virtues, those which required an unintermitted and relentless severity of self-discipline, it had through them created for itself a world in which they might rapidly become vices and were indeed already becoming such. The storage of human power which discipline had made possible was now threatening to exploit society in its own interest. Such a menace was a reminder that the finest quality of individual power is that which labours, not for its own even most righteous dominance, but for the extension of an equal justice among men. With the growth of such a state of feeling and opinion it was inevitable that there should be change even in the interpretation of our

nature. An influential school of thinkers proclaimed the view that man was to be interpreted through his social instincts and faculties more correctly than through even his reason and his will, that he was more essentially a social being than a creature of thought or of action. The root-quality in man, that which made him most truly and fully man, was his natural understanding of his fellows, an understanding from which proceeded his purest and worthiest emotions, which chastened and subdued his will to the pursuit of an end of general good, which humanised his reason and his conscience. And with this view of what was most fundamental and, therefore, most akin to the Divine in human nature, there came a revival for the Christian thinker of the importance and real significance of the Johannine conception of God. It may be said that in that phrase "God is love" contemporary theology has found its sole and sufficient inspiration. Its whole effort has been directed to sounding, if possible, the depths of its meaning. For it the doctrine of the Incarnation has become something more and greater than the almost occasional instrument of the Atonement which it had been in such large measure for Western

theology from the days of St Augustine onwards. The modern theologian has gone back to the old Eastern conception of the Incarnation as the complement of creation. He sees in God's presence to His universe no mere sustaining of created life in its essential being, no mere Providence, but an eternally redemptive activity in which alone the purpose of God towards His creatures becomes complete. It is true that this conception has not been altogether unknown in the West. St Thomas's admirable doctrine of God's three stages of contact with the created order, in nature, in grace, and in the Incarnate Life, approaches it very closely, more especially as he insists that each higher contact would be impossible without that which is below it in the scale, and that it does in fact include and continue the results of the lower. Nature prepares grace, and nature and grace the Incarnate Life. Grace assumes nature into itself and does not just leave it behind as a discarded instrument. So, too, the Incarnate Life retains within itself as a constitutive portion of itself the nature and grace which have made its manifestation possible.

Now this conception of the divine nature

and its relation to the universe which, though adumbrated in the very beginnings of Christain theology, is now, for the first time, in almost unchallenged possession of the field, is again a right belief. No one would be likely to deny that it presents us with a true object of worship. And it has the additional advantage of meeting from the side of religion what seems to be perhaps the most essential aspect of the world-view which contemporary science is presenting to us. I would not, of course, dogmatise in a field with which I am myself so little acquainted, and in which even the most competent experts are very far from agreement upon many of the most important matters which fall within the range of their investigation. But there does seem to be one constant factor in modern scientific picturings of the world-process. It is a process such as can best be described by M. Bergson's term " creative evolution," or Professor Lloyd Morgan's " emergent evolution." That is to say, there is in every individual form and moment of nature from the most elemental up to the most complex an expansiveness, an irrepressible urge of life, in virtue of which each form prepares for the inclusion of its own

individual achievement in some higher form fuller in vital content, if I may put it so, and richer in quality than itself. Thus each can only secure the peculiar quality which is its own, each affirms itself in its own special quality of being, by a kind and degree of energy which at least helps to make a new form expressing a new quality possible. Life here seems to depend upon a kind of inner sympathy between its contiguous moments, and that apparently as much in the region of chemical change as in the sphere of sentient life itself. It is not, I think, difficult to see how such a view may for the religious mind open up new ways of conceiving more intimately than ever before God's action in and relation to the universe. We may still have a long way to traverse before the reconciliation between science and religion can become complete. But, at least, the reconciliation is no longer hopeless. Nor, I think, can they henceforward remain satisfied with the neutrality, armed or peaceful, which has for long been their accepted attitude towards each other.

This at least is certain, that worship is hesitant and impeded when it lacks an object

which is intellectually conceivable in its relations not only with man himself but with the whole universe which surrounds him and of which he is a part. In that sense the *lex credendi* is the *lex orandi*, even though, as I hold, worship as an instinct is prior to belief. The instinct after all grows into a vital power, a power of life and effectually controlling life, only in so far as it has assurance of the nature of its object. That assurance, which we call faith, is no doubt mainly trust and dependence, a trust and dependence both founded and issuing in awe. God is always *mysterium tremendum*, in Otto's now well-worked phrase. But our assurance must also be intellectual, it must be some kind and degree of reasoned knowledge. When Christian worship was most spontaneous and natural, it was so largely because it believed itself to be in possession of such knowledge. Of God's own nature, in its apartness as it were, mediæval religion did not any more than religion in our own day claim to have more than the most imperfect and fragmentary knowledge. It believed as fully as we that perfect knowledge of the divine essence was impossible. But it was sure that it possessed the most accurate specu-

lative knowledge of what it was in man that was most authentically akin to the divine nature, and also of God's relations to the universe as a whole. Its belief on the latter point was in large measure an illusion, because its conception of the universe was too simple and mechanical, the conception, viz., of a static and unalterable order imposed from without by the Divine Will. But in that it was a belief which no one questioned, and a belief which placed God in a known relation to the universal order and to every part of it, it provided worship with what all were compelled to recognise, and did in fact recognise, as the one true and undoubted object of man's worship. Hence worship was then more spontaneous, more unforced, more universal than it ever has been since. When the modification of mediæval belief in God's relations to the universe by the more accurate knowledge of process came to be generally felt, worship at once began to suffer in two ways. On the one hand, it became hesitant and critical of itself. On the other, it hardened into a system in which its symbolical character was all but forgotten and an almost magical value was imputed to it. Belief, therefore,

the most adequate belief possible at each particular moment, is necessary in order that worship may be saved from the parallel dangers of mere religious custom, of magic, and of paralysing self-criticism.

III

THE ESSENCE OF WORSHIP

"RELIGION," says Cicero briefly, "is the worship of the gods." And elsewhere he extends his definition by stating that it is concerned with the care and ceremony due to a certain nature superior to ourselves which we call divine. We may perhaps shrink from this complete identification of religion with ceremonial worship. We may recall the words attributed to our Lord by the author of the Fourth Gospel that they who worship the God who is Spirit must worship Him in spirit and in truth. Yet there is, I think, sufficient reason behind the claim made by a recent Roman writer on behalf of the Liturgy of the Christian Church, that "it embraces, as in a vast combination, the highest efforts of the human mind to grasp and express that which is indescribable and divine." Worship, that is to say, in being ceremony is also something more than ceremony. Even as ceremony it

reveals a depth and fullness of quality in human nature which but for it would have remained unrevealed. Even as ceremony it seeks after and in some measure attains to an apprehension of the Divine which without it could not have been attained. And so its reactions, even as ceremony, in human life are not to be confined to the transitory impressions of artificially stimulated emotional or perceptive states. They abide, or are capable of abiding, as an enrichment of our human nature so characteristic as to seem almost a new kind of nature.

These, at any rate, are the features and effects of worship which I propose now to discuss. But since, as Christians, our immediate personal interest in worship must be connected with its specifically Christian character, it seems well that we should consider first of all, whether it is possible to define with some measure of exactness what it is that is distinctive in the very essence of Christian worship. Now it is, of course, clear that the cultus or forms of worship peculiar to any religion must be affected by the conceptions of God and of man, and of their mutual relations to which that religion has attained. The *lex*

credendi and the *lex orandi*, the substance of belief and the very nature of worship, are always most closely interdependent. And few, I suppose, would deny that every real and sincere modification in the matter of belief is accompanied by some corresponding change in the character of worship. The *lex credendi* is in some effective degree the *lex orandi*. But all who have reflected deeply about religion, and especially all for whom such reflection has been motived and made possible by a sufficiently profound experience of the religious life, have agreed in holding that it is still more true to say that the *lex orandi* is the *lex credendi*. In other words, there is a natural priority of worship to belief. It is worship that shapes belief in the sphere of religion, or perhaps more accurately, that gives belief a specifically religious character. Apart from worship and the attitude of spirit which it represents, belief in the religious sphere may be theologically sound and accurate, but it is not as yet fully religious. Like the believer, belief itself needs to be born again. As an affirmation of the intellect, it is born into the world of abstract relations with which the intellect deals. Only as an affirmation of the wor-

shipping spirit does it achieve its second birth as creative truth.

Now if this be true, it becomes all the more important in the history of any religion to determine the original idea of worship, or if you prefer it attitude of the worshipping spirit, out of which that religion arose and became a definite system of belief. And in the case of Christianity, at least, it is not difficult to find this original idea which was to control all later developments of worship. It is contained in that saying of St Paul which all the early Christian doctors were so fond of quoting in this connection: "I beseech you, brethren, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." This was accounted the only true λογίκη λάτρεια, *rationabile obsequium*, worship according to reason. It was worship in spirit and in truth, for it was the worship of the spirit where alone its sincerity could be tested, along every sensible avenue of its expression. Life in its completeness, in spirit as informing body, in body as at once manifesting and proving spirit, was the characteristic form of Christian worship. To this wholeness of the active spirit as the true worship of God

every outward form and act of worship was ministerially related. The outward act was but the symbol and the stimulus of the spiritual attitude and activity. "Our hearts," says St Augustine, "when they are uplifted to Him become His altar. We offer to Him the blood of sacrificial victims when we ourselves contend for His truth even unto blood. We honour Him with sweetest incense when in His presence we are aglow with pious and holy love. It is His gifts in us, yea, our very selves, that in our votive offerings we restore to Him. In the fire of burning charity upon the altar of the heart the offering of our humility and praise ascends to Him. This is the worship of God. This is true religion and piety, the service due to God alone."

Now it is from this root-idea of worship as a self-offering that all the other specifically Christian conceptions of worship spring. But when I speak of specifically Christian conceptions I do not mean to imply that Christianity has evolved wholly new forms and expressions for the relations of the human to the divine. There is nothing more noteworthy than the general similarity of those relations as conceived and expressed in all religions from the

most primitive to the most spiritually developed. What I do mean is that each stage in the upward development of the religious sense is marked by the achievement of a new quality and intensity of spiritual feeling which find specific expression in worship, and that Christian worship as self-offering in its fullest range and depth expresses such quality and intensity in a unique degree. It may, therefore, be profitable to consider some of the ways in which the specific quality of Christian worship manifests itself. There is, first of all, the fact that Christianity at its deepest and sincerest has always regarded worship as a discipline. Since worship is for it self-offering, it has aimed continuously at producing in each soul a self worthy of being offered. And so the whole system of spiritual discipline came to be included within the domain of worship. So, also, all worship, even where it had no immediately disciplinary intention, came to be regarded as having predominantly a disciplinary value. It was almost a commonplace of mediæval theology that worship was not for God's sake but for ours, that God did not need our worship, whereas we needed, that our spirits might live at all, to worship Him.

God's glory is infinite, ran the formal reasoning of the theologians, so that all the worship of humanity cannot add one iota to its sum. God's knowledge is infinite, so that not only does He not need our prayers to inform Him of our needs, but also that He alone does know what our real needs, the needs which He can and will satisfy, are. Praise and prayer are for our sake. They are the discipline by which we depart from our mere selves and ascend in selves that are more-than-selves to Him. The conception of God which lay behind this view, the conception of His changeless perfection which required nothing from His creatures, was no doubt religiously inadequate. It is significant that St Thomas occasionally felt its inadequacy, as when he accounts for the multitude and diversity of natures in the universe by God's need of a world of creatures to whom He might communicate the infinite treasure of His goodness *and have it represented by them*. In our day at least religion seems to demand a creative or quasi-creative faculty in man. But whatever the religious inadequacy of the view, whether from the side of man or from that of God, it did, at least, witness powerfully to man's need of worship and to

the character of worship as the supreme discipline of the human spirit. The discipline which we need as men is a discipline which will enable us to leave a world in which each self is its own centre and to ascend with all that we are into a world of which God is centre. That ascent into God, as St Thomas called it, may, and, indeed, in some sense, must be conceived mystically. But in that it is no mere mystical escape from self, but the patient and determined attempt to lift the actual self in its total feeling and activity into a higher realm of being, it must also be conceived morally. It is the deliberate training of every faculty which we possess into accordance with a will, urgent hints and impulses of which we find within ourselves, but which we yet recognise as essentially and in its fullness the will of another and a greater than ourselves. It is that discipline of the incorporate spirit, of the spirit conditioned and made actual by body, which St Paul proclaimed to be worship according to reason.

But, again, the purpose of this disciplined ascent towards God is that we may have communion with Him. This conception of communion with Deity is no doubt to be found in

some form or other in every human religion, and in the higher religions it is present often in an exceptionally purified form. Yet it, too, often retains an unsatisfactory note of mysticism inclining to magic rather than to an authentically moral discipline. It is the final result of a semi-magical initiation. It is reached as the term of a purifying preparation. That which enters into communion with the Divine is not the ordinary intimate self in which we habitually dwell, but a spectral self which has momentarily sloughed off as it were this vesture of decay. Worship is not so much communion itself as the means by which communion may be attained. Here, again, Christian worship in virtue of its root-idea has largely escaped the dangers of such a non-moral or, at least, imperfectly moralised mysticism. For it worship itself is communion. It is a union of will with the object of worship, or it is not genuine worship at all. Worship is throughout the love of God, the attachment of the will in the fullness of its desire and effort to that which He essentially is—the Perfect Truth, the Supreme Goodness. There is no moment of worship into which that desire and that purpose must not enter if it is

to be the worship in spirit and truth of which our Lord spoke.

But communion, as the very word implies, cannot be unilateral. It depends indeed on the sincere effort of man's spirit manifested in a constant and faithful self-discipline. But it is supremely the act of God. And, again, it is through worship that this divine activity towards us is both realised and received. Now, here it is that there is danger of an unconscious intrusion of the magical, and here especially has Christianity striven to counteract and if possible to avert that danger. To realise how it has done so we must take account of its use of two ideas, the sacramental idea and the idea of grace. And we must consider them separately, for however much they have coalesced for the practical uses of worship they are, in fact, separate, even if complementary. First of all, it will be apparent, I think, that the Pauline definition of worship involves what is fundamental in the sacramental idea, the co-operation, viz., of spirit and matter throughout the total economy of our human life. It is unnecessary to insist upon the fact of this alliance or of its importance for the life of man. It means that not only is body for man

the necessary vehicle of spirit, but also that body and the matter by which it is renewed have their part in determining the quality of spirit in man. Religion, therefore, cannot overlook this alliance. Discipline, for instance, must be of the body if it is ever to reach the spirit. If the body were allowed to take its own way while the spirit meditated *in vacuo*, such meditation would prove to be a mere dispersal of effort spiritually fruitless and self-defeating. But even the intentionally religious discipline of the body may become a mechanical and meaningless process unless it is also an imperiously felt need of the spirit in its actual effort to reach a more perfected and satisfying activity. Thus religion is exposed to a twofold danger. On the one hand, it may altogether ignore the inherently sacramental needs and satisfactions of our life as incorporate spirit. It may accept every unregulated movement of the inner life, if only sufficiently overwhelming and unaccountable, as authentic evidence of the action of the Divine Spirit within us. Or it may, on the other hand, in the attempt to avoid this danger, invest a specialised system of sacramental worship with the exclusive and almost

automatic power of conferring the renewing gifts of the Divine Spirit. It is probably impossible for any religion to avoid altogether either of these dangers, and it is certain that Christianity has not always wholly escaped them. But it has at least through its wisest teachers and most skilful directors of conscience consistently attempted to counteract them.

Now, in so far as it has been successful here, it has been owing, I think, chiefly to the sanity of its doctrine of grace. The very idea of grace arises out of man's consciousness of his powerlessness as a mere creature of nature to achieve his own salvation. His salvation is and must be a free gift of God. But in what does this gift consist? Is it the magical supersession of our ordinary nature by some mysterious power which has no definable or even strictly conceivable relation to it, a miraculous illumination of our spirits which enables us to dispense with all the ordinary means of their enlightenment? Or, again, is it some necessary and certain consequence of our participation in sacramental acts which we believe transforms nature even though we remain unconscious of the transformation and

cannot define either in what it consists or how it works? The popular idea of grace is perhaps not far removed from one or other of these.

But by the great masters of Christian thought no such conception has ever been entertained. For them grace has always meant the impartation of God's own nature. God has only one thing to give—Himself. And that He gives in response to every sincere desire and disciplined effort of man to receive it. And, again, that He can give only because man in the innermost truth and depth of his own nature can receive it and make it his own. Grace is just God's share in the act by which communion is effected between the divine and the human spirits. His answer to man's need is just Himself, and that answer is possible because there is an authentic kinship between the divine and the human, because in the biblical phrase man is made in the image of God. For St Thomas and the earlier mediæval schoolmen, indeed, it was only through the intellect that fallen man continued to be in the image of God. But, after all, the intellect was a point of contact with the Divine which opened man's whole

nature to its action. For the intellect was both speculative and practical. Through it man could desire and seek after the Perfect Truth and the Supreme Goodness which was God. In answer to the sincerity of that desire and that quest the Perfect Truth and the Supreme Good actually and authentically came in purifying knowledge, in renewing and transforming communion. In other words, God's gift of Himself, of His own eternal and immutable nature of Truth and Goodness, was the response to a real activity of what was most fundamental in man's nature. But, clearly, that activity to be fully real needed the most patient, the most conscientious, the most continuous discipline. It needed a discipline of the whole nature, of spirit and body, of the living will and the will's equally living instrument. The life in both needed to acquire a unity of purpose, of direction, of habit. And the partnership of the body in that discipline required, indeed prescribed, ordinarily certain fixed moments, places, acts of concentration, recognition, resolve. Thus the dual nature of man, itself a kind of sacrament, sought and found its most natural and necessary discipline for its quest of God in sacra-

mental acts. But, again, that discipline was not, could not afford to be, a mere preparation of the quest. It was *itself* the quest of the Perfect Truth, the Supreme Good. Momentary acts merged in a fixed and continuous habit of spirit. It was that habit which, both in each momentary act and in its continuous self as linking them up, received the gift of the divine grace, was aware of that certain superior nature abiding with and in the kindred but inferior human nature as its genuinely enabling life.

It is in this way then that the sacramental idea and the idea of grace have merged to moralise radically in the economy of Christian worship the still supremely mystical conception of communion between the human and the divine. And here, perhaps, it may be well to insist that one of the chief educative values of worship for the human spirit is that in it and for it is vindicated in an eminent degree the fundamental identity of the moral and mystical. That identity indeed is denied by the utilitarian, and is often unrecognised by the Christian. Nevertheless, on any sufficient view of our human life, it seems to be unassailable. It may be a sufficient explanation of morality

in its various local and temporary forms to say that it is the mass of social custom determined by the various accidents of our human history and enforced under purely external penalties by the social will. But the social will to morality has itself to be accounted for. And whatever in our short-sighted moods we may say, it is not to be accounted for merely by the instinct in society of self-preservation. Even in the most primitive societies, indeed in them especially, it is never conceived of as their own will to live efficiently, but as a will imposed upon them by higher powers which have the secret of the happy life or, at least, of the life which may be free from unhappiness. But further, as morality develops, new evidences of its mystical character appear. The individual is no longer satisfied with conforming to it as the mere member of a restricted social unit. If he thinks of its social character at all, the society whose will he conceives it to be has widened so as to embrace all humanity. But that will has become for him essentially a universal will of right whose eternal and immutable pattern is laid up in the heavens.

And, again, he comes to feel that obedience

to that will is utterly imperfect and unworthy so long as it is motived only by the power of an external constraint. Only something that he can honestly recognise as a devotion to right for its own sake, as a love of right, seems to him a sufficient motive of obedience. Right has become for him the will of One who is supremely to be loved as the unique source and inspirer of eternal happiness for all. And this love of the Righteous One is the very centre of worship, and especially of our Christian worship. It is surely noteworthy that the most consistent theme of the old Christian prayers is man's supreme need of this love of righteousness. It is both the means and the end of our ascent to God. "That we may obtain that which Thou dost promise make us to love that which Thou dost command." "Pour into our hearts such love toward Thee, that we, loving Thee above all things, may obtain Thy promises which exceed all that we can desire." "Graft in our hearts the love of Thy Name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness." "Grant that like as we do believe Thy only-begotten Son to have ascended into the heavens, so we may also in heart and mind thither ascend." "Grant

unto Thy people that they may love the thing which Thou commandest and desire that which Thou dost promise." "Incline our hearts to keep this law." "Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit that we may perfectly love Thee." "Pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before Thee."

I have heard it urged against some of these very prayers, with their insistent and reiterated appeal for power to love right ever more fully and more disinterestedly, that they are, on the contrary, signal instances of the interested character of Christian prayer in that if they ask for increase in the love of right it is only as a means to the attainment of a promised happiness. It is almost impossible to conceive of a more hopeless misunderstanding. The promises which we desire to obtain are but the fulfilment, the completeness, of that same love of right which we need here, though still in its incompleteness, in order to do any right at all. The eternal blessedness of man as the great Christian doctors conceived it was the pure intellectual vision of the Perfect

Right as it existed eternally and substantially in God. That vision could only be achieved through the love of right and was in effect that love when it had reached its perfect term. And, therefore, man needed even more to pray for the power of desiring those promises than for the power of loving God's present commands. Far from that desire being the facile impulse of a selfish interestedness, it was the very crown and summit of disinterestedness to which even the most perfect saintship could hardly attain.

It is thus that in every form of worship, in meditation, prayer, praise, and sacrament, morality finds and recognises most clearly its mystical character and origin. Thus, too, worship is the most perfect discipline of man's incorporate spirit, its discipline both as individual and as socially related and extended. But to be a discipline worship itself must be extended in action into the true and living service of which it is a symbol. Its symbolism must be throughout sacramental, that is, not the mere sign of a service different in kind from itself, but the very nerve and motive, the source and inspiration, of a service of like substance with itself. St Paul's *rationabile*

obsequium, his worship according to reason, must be vitally continuous with the symbolical worship of the Church if the latter is to have any value or even reality. And life and symbol together are again one continuous act of discipline leading up into and blending with the final blessedness in which alone man's nature has its term as appointed in God's redeeming purpose. Worship in its wholeness and in every part and aspect of its wholeness is an *ascensio spiritus in Deum*. And, finally, worship includes the authentic response of God to this our human aspiration. It is that communion of our spirits with God's which only God can make possible. Hence the insistence of the great Christian doctors that God is and must be beforehand with us in every act of worship, that the more truly and fully we are ourselves the more certainly operative is God within us, that prayer is His nature within us ascending to its own, that it is Jesus Christ Himself who, at the Christian altar, offers memorially to God through the words of the ministering priest the one sacrifice of His incarnate life for men.

IV

THE EXPRESSION OF WORSHIP

In my second lecture I tried to show that, though worship as an instinct has a natural priority to belief, yet its healthy development depends upon its continuous and anxious desire to know its object as He is, in the fullest degree possible, but especially to know Him in His relations to our human nature and to the universe of which we are a part. I wish now to return to this subject and to consider it from a slightly different angle. Now, what we know of ourselves and of the universe is not a fixed quantity. That knowledge is always being extended by the application of new and improved methods of inquiry. And the widening of knowledge has necessarily some effect upon our conception of God's relations to His world. The general ground plan of that conception remains indeed unaltered by any and every modification in our knowledge of ourselves and the world. God remains

throughout for man's religious sense the Creator of man and the world, and their Creator in that wider sense, on which Christian theology has always insisted, of not merely having brought the world into being by a definite act, but also of sustaining it in being at every moment of its existence. The theological view of creation has always been not that of a momentary act in the past but of a continuous and ever-present process. So, too, God is towards man the power which redeems, strengthens, fulfils his very nature. At these two points at least there is no room for fundamental difference or variety of belief. If man believes in God at all, he believes in Him as Creator and Redeemer. But those two ideas are little more than the framework of a picture which in all its details of tone and composition has yet to be painted. Or perhaps they may be more correctly described as the first rough sketch of a picture whose significant detail has yet to be filled in. Apart, indeed, from the effects of secular knowledge upon religious beliefs they have a development of their own, a development corresponding to deeper and, as we hope, truer apprehensions of God. This development, too, may be in some degree

motived and stimulated by the impact of knowledge from alien fields. But that is by no means necessary. It may be entirely due to feelings and experiences which belong to the religious life only. On the other hand, there are modifications of doctrine which are occasioned with a practical entirety by our more accurate knowledge of man and nature. We might, indeed, with advantage distinguish between the terms *development* and *modification* of religious doctrine, reserving the former for changes due to a genuinely religious deepening of content in the doctrine and the latter for accommodations to knowledge strictly foreign to the religious field, yet affecting it.

Now, it is this latter kind of change in belief which I think affects worship most, and that for a reason which, on reflection, ought to be fairly evident. Worship is the most sensitive expression of religious feeling, because it is the most immediate and intimate. Beliefs we can discuss, and, indeed, since they are in their detailed expression a result of intellectual effort, must discuss. In their actual form they come to us through some kind of explanation. They have a history, and to apprehend their meaning at all adequately we ought to know their

history. But it is not so with worship. We can use the forms of worship with the same sincerity, and if so with the same effect, whether we are acquainted with their history or not. And, therefore, anything that gives pause to worship, that makes it hesitate and think about itself, is an offence to it. Now worship is not thus offended by what I have called genuine developments of religious belief, by gradual changes arising out of a deeper apprehension of its own content. But when belief is modified by knowledge that is not directly religious, worship is at once disturbed by the change. Nothing can be more natural. For the ordinary faithful and devout believer belief is not really separated from worship. His interest in belief is not speculative. It is almost a pain to him to hear the beliefs which guide and inspire his worship, and which have realised all their value for him in doing so, discussed at all. One of the greatest difficulties of the contemporary religious teacher, whether the teaching be given from the pulpit or from the school rostrum, arises from just this fact. The religious teacher of to-day, and especially the preacher, knows that he is not duly discharging his teaching function if he does not

attempt to meet the difficulties which the more instructed among his congregation feel. But he knows also, or if he does not, he is soon made aware, that such discussion, that even the bare suggestion that there are difficulties, is an intolerable offence and pain to the uninstructed devout. The reason is obvious. They are listening not at all in the mood of the inquirer but in the mood of the worshipper, and everything that disturbs that mood is an offence. The situation, of course, is one that has arisen time and again in the history of Christianity and has had sometimes to be met with a firm hand on the part of authority. When anthropomorphism was branded as a heresy in the Fourth Century, it was found that the great majority of the monks of the Nitrian desert had held just that conception of God, and there must have been many an echo to the plaint of the old monk Serapion—"They have taken away my God."

Now, it is just this difficulty which has inspired a certain movement to-day in the direction of magnifying worship at the expense of belief with the hope of thus saving religion in a time of change and stress. It is

said that since worship is essentially symbolism, it is sufficiently elastic to cover all the modifications which have taken place or can possibly take place in the sphere of belief. The object of our worship, it is urged, is indefinable in the sense of being beyond all sufficient definition. Belief itself is symbolism, all belief, indeed, whether scientific or religious. The terms and statements used in defining religious belief especially are but a vague imagery suggestive of the ultimate Reality which we worship rather than accurately or adequately descriptive of it. Admittedly there is necessity to do all that is possible to make this religious imagery less inadequate. But when all that is possible has been done the new statements will be fundamentally as inadequate as the old. They will, indeed, more closely correspond with our changed world-view. But they will be as far as ever from defining the Incomprehensible. Worship meanwhile is by its very nature concrete, an actualisation of this faith of ours which in the form of belief is so elusive and tends to become so dispersive. We cannot exorcise the variety of belief or coerce it into uniformity. But worship as an outward act is a natural point of concentration.

All alike can use it to express the special *nuance* of belief of each.

Now, there is much in this contention which I can accept wholeheartedly. Worship, in the sense of the outward acts by which the religious attitude in its totality is expressed, is, of course, symbolism. And it is more elastic than belief, which is also symbolism in statement. The same acts of worship are capable of expressing very large variety in the exact interpretation of fundamental belief without necessarily sacrificing, which is important, the sincerity of religious feeling in any single worshipper. Yet I am not convinced that there is any real hope in the plan of exalting worship as against belief, of concentrating on cultus and leaving belief in anything but the most general statement of fundamentals to take care of itself. As I have insisted throughout in these lectures, worship is fully real only when it is spontaneous and inevitable. It has never been made, it has always grown. The worship of the Christian Church, for instance, was just the worship of the Synagogue adapting itself spontaneously to the new conditions. The only considerable addition to it was the Christian Eucharist, an

inevitable addition in view of its institution by our Lord Himself. And even it, apart from the actual words of institution, follows closely upon the lines of the Synagogue worship. The earlier part of the eucharistic liturgy, the Mass of the Catechumens, consisted of that combination of prayers and of readings from the Sacred Scriptures which the Synagogue had fixed as the norm of public worship. Even at the Reformation there was no mere invention in the matter of worship. The Lutheran Churches followed the old rite with a minimum of change, the English Church rearranged its order with a view, as it professed, to simplifying it and making it more intelligible, and even the Calvinist Churches aimed only at returning to what they believed to be the primitive form and intention of the service. It is significant that during the negotiations for the reunion of the Roman and Lutheran Churches which occupied the whole of the last quarter of the Seventeenth Century, Bossuet could say that he regarded it as a special working of Divine Providence that in the matter of the Eucharist the two Churches had remained in doctrine so nearly at one that it would be possible for the Roman Church to

allow the unchanged Lutheran rite in the reunited Church. And a quarter of a century earlier he had assured Paul Ferry, the Calvinist minister at Metz, that the use of the words of institution in consecration, whatever other prayers were used or omitted in the service, was sufficient of itself to make the Eucharist a real offering in the Tridentine sense. So little was the change in the actual forms of worship deliberately made by the Reformers. The really great change in reformed worship was a change not of form but of accent. It came from the stress laid upon the importance of the sermon, in other words, upon the importance of direct teaching as compared with the pure symbolism of worship. It was this importance attached to the sermon which, from the first, changed the accent, and only very gradually, and that by a growing process of omission rather than by the deliberate introduction of new elements, changed the form, of the older service. This process of omission reached its term not in any of the older churches of the Reform but in the English Nonconformist churches of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries.

Changes, therefore, and very great changes

have taken place in the forms of worship during the past history of Christianity. But for the most part they have not been the result of deliberate policy, but rather of a new spirit and temper gradually bringing about a new direction of religious interest. The only considerable exception I can think of is the attempt of Puritanism within the English Church to cut off the entail of tradition at a stroke. But there, at least, it was not successful, and when by secession Puritanism gained its freedom, it showed very clearly that the sole motive of its concern in the matter of worship had been that it might be made the more adequate expression of a changed belief. Thus the uniform example of the past seems to prove that worship does not change save when a change of belief forces it to change, and that then, even if its form should remain the same, its whole spirit and character gradually conform to the changed belief. It may, of course, be contended that the present situation is entirely new, and that, therefore, analogies from the past are valueless and may be misleading. Now, novelty in this connection is a very dubious term. For no possible human situation is entirely new, and yet there is none

also which is not in a very real sense unique and unexampled. Exactly the same conditions never recur. And yet within wholly different conditions humanity has had to face problems very similar in general character to those which it has to face to-day. I admit, however, the comparative novelty and uniqueness of the present situation, and I admit above all its gravity. The structure of Christian belief is assailed at its very foundations. I doubt whether in such a case worship can be generally revived otherwise than by the general revival of Christian belief. And I doubt still more whether worship, if it could be artificially revived, and its revival in such a case would be necessarily artificial, could even help in restoring the confidence and certainty of belief. We may admit with a fuller consciousness than our forefathers the symbolic and approximate character of doctrinal formulas. We may consciously demand a larger symbolism in worship both to accentuate what is fundamental in belief and to cover its wide permitted variety. But the measure of certainty expressed in the one will be the measure of certainty felt in the other. They run a parallel course. No artificial stimulation of

the one can lead to an authentic and permanent revival of the other. So long as belief is differently accented in different religious groups, so long will worship be differently accented also.

Yet there is one altogether laudable and hopeful element in the new feeling for the revival of worship. It calls attention at a time when it is most necessary to do so to the fact that worship is not only an essential element in religion but also the element which makes religion vital. The intellectual interest in religion was perhaps never more general than it is to-day. No one would deny the significance of that fact or the hope for the future which it contains. We may even hope that it points to an anxious quest for God on the part of a religiously hesitant age which, in Pascal's famous phrase, would not be possible if it had not already found Him. But it would be rash to assume that it is such in any considerable degree. Much of it represents all too obviously either a scientific interest in religion as in any other field of study or a vague dissatisfaction with the ignorance and limitations of our human state. We need, therefore, to be reminded that mere interest in religion is not

religion, that religion is not real till it feels the need of expressing itself in worship. The intellectual quest of God has indeed in itself a very great value, and in so far as it approaches what the mediæval theologians meant by it, the anxious and disciplined attempt to rise from and through the knowledge of creatures and of the universal order to the knowledge of God Himself, it has the highest value. For then it is worship at its highest also. But no mediæval theologian would have entertained the idea that such a development of worship could be reached without a careful and habitual use of the ordinary means and acts of worship. For us, too, that need remains, and will remain so long as man exists. I do not think that even in this age of religious hesitation and questioning we have any reason to fear the disappearance or to suspect the radical absence of that need. Many feel it the more poignantly that its satisfaction through the ordinary forms is for them impossible. Their sincerity forbids them to use forms which do not help them at least to express the emotion of awed reverence towards the Eternal Order which they genuinely feel. It is indeed largely at meeting their case that the modern symbolist

is aiming. To such he says in effect: "The instinct of worship is too precious and essential to allow us to leave it unsatisfied and uncultivated. No doubt the traditional forms of Christian worship are not wholly sufficient. But then no forms can be. And yet without the use of some form there is no definite act, and without the regular repetition of definite acts no trustworthy habit of the spirit can be formed. Remember that the form can be nothing more than a symbol of some vital relation between ourselves and the Divine which we desire from our side to establish and to cultivate, a symbol also that from God's side that relation is already assured. The habitual use of these symbols will be at least an effectual means of stimulating and educating your reverence towards God and of confirming your faith in Him. Can you afford to dispense with them?"

I have already stated my own view of the strength and weakness of such an appeal. It does recall the essential nature and the real value of forms of worship. But it dismisses too lightly the claim of definite belief to have its full share in determining the forms, however admittedly symbolic, which express it. And

it seems to overlook the fact that the present variety of accent in belief has its parallel in an equal variety of accent in worship. And variety of accent in worship means almost of necessity variety of form. It seems to me that even with the admission of the symbolic character of worship a greater variety and flexibility of form is more likely in the immediate future than the return to one single form as a symbol capable of being variously used and interpreted by all. But what matters supremely is that through one form or other the habit of worship should be recovered. For without it there can only result a steady deterioration of the human spirit.

Let me conclude these lectures by a brief review of what worship can do and has done for us men, and of the loss which we suffer even through its partial eclipse. Well, first of all, it fosters, it would hardly be exaggeration to say that it creates, the meditative temper. The power of withdrawing from the surface to the centre is perhaps native to us. It is certainly imposed by some of the most constant and universal experiences of our human state. A great joy or a great sorrow drives us inwards, and not to vacant musing but to the

bracing and stimulating task of self-judgment. Some unexpected and signal manifestation of a friend's affection rebukes us, sends us back from the superficial feelings in which we ordinarily dwell to a place of awed silence within, where the work of self-judgment proceeds and the gain of a bracing self-knowledge accrues. Or some grievous loss will have the same effect. Every deep stirring of the emotions to an unselfish issue, every call to an arduous duty, every undertaking which pledges us to a genuine self-offering (and there are fortunately many such heroic opportunities of the spirit for all of us) induces the meditative mood and cultivates the meditative power. Life would be very poor indeed without these opportunities, but it will become poorer still if it takes them lightly. Now sincere religious worship is the habit of the spirit which recognises these opportunities most immediately and uses them most fruitfully. Its every act is a withdrawal from the surface to commune with a Presence which judges and which makes its judgment our judgment of ourselves. All the depth, the calm, the self-mastery, the trustworthy possession of self in the midst of the most adverse and hostile circumstance, all

these things which are the finest expression of character issue from some meditative habit of the spirit, natural or acquired, and might largely disappear if worship, which so generously fosters and deepens that habit, could become meaningless for us, and do actually tend to disappear so far as it momentarily becomes so. Then, too, there is this to be considered. The meditative mood in its deepest and most effectual quality comes only with years. It is not necessarily a mood of youth. And when it is, it is perhaps more of the nature of poetic musing, a secret rapture in the more outward aspects of the world's wonder, itself certainly a high and notable gift. But youth, speaking generally, is not meditative but active. And, therefore, it seems the more necessary that worship should be there for the young from their earliest years to accustom them to a mood which will one day become more fully and richly theirs.

Again, worship induces a concentration of the spirit for the purpose of action, no longer the spirit's concentration only in thought and reflection, which is, I suppose, meditation, but its concentration in will. It is, of course, true that action itself, or at least all important

and largely influential action, is a kind of discipline, demands and produces a real habit of concentration of the will. But such concentration for utilitarian ends may easily become a hardening and impoverishment of the spirit rather than an enrichment of its quality. Christian worship on the other hand has, at any rate at its best, tended to concentrate in the will to action all the best qualities of the soul, its love of justice and its feeling for mercy, its moral sternness and its moral pity, its conscience and its force. In short, the concentration required by action if uninformed by religious feeling is necessarily utilitarian only. It is the concentration necessary to a defined and particular end and needs no quality which is not contributory to that end. The act of concentration inspired by worship on the other hand may be directed to the same or any other particular end, but it is directed also at the same time and in the same act to a general end of good. And these two ends it is its conscious purpose to conciliate. And, therefore, it must include the highest qualities of the spirit in its will to action. We are still so permeated with the spirit of worship, both consciously operative and received as an almost

unconscious heritage from our past, that it is difficult for us to conceive of any action as meriting approbation which is not inspired by an ardent desire for right as well as by practical sagacity and competence. But consider for a moment the possibility of the disappearance of that spirit which worship has created, and you would have a world morally hag-ridden by sectional interests, delivered as a prey to the talons of the strongest, a world from which humaneness and honour had been eliminated and in which the force of the tiger reigned supreme. I am only too well aware, for history is our abundant witness in the matter, that the spirit of worship and the concentration which it produces may be directly responsible for the perpetration of the grossest and most unpardonable cruelties. No one has ever entered a more terrible indictment against the Church itself during the ages of religious persecution—from the time of Innocent III. to Bossuet, from the beginning of the Thirteenth to the end of the Seventeenth Centuries was the term he fixed—than the late Lord Acton. And I remember distinctly some twenty years ago the late Professor Gwatkin rebuking me severely for my expressed admira-

tion of St Carlo Borromeo. Dr Gwatkin's unfavourable judgment of the famous Archbishop of Milan was no doubt abundantly justified by his action as a persecutor in the Savoyard revolt, and it was a judgment which Acton almost fiercely confirmed. All this has to be admitted. The very concentration of the spirit which the worship of the Church induced and fostered did of itself evoke and intensify the persecuting spirit in all sections of the Church, and that in men of an otherwise saintly life like Calvin or Carlo Borromeo. But, again, think of the world without that spirit and you will still deplore its irregularities, but you will weigh against them the legacy of an earnestness which is the salt of life.

Finally, worship has been the nurse of civility, of politeness. All the small coin of our spiritual civilisation, without which the more intimate human relations, what we may call our spiritual trade, could not be carried on at all, has been minted by the worship of the Christian Church. Not in Kings' courts, nor in a society specially devoted to the cultivation of agreeable manners, has the profound respect for others regardless of rank or other social superiority had its birth, but at the

Christian altar or in the shrine, however humble, of Christian prayer. There has been learned the secret of an equality which knows no envy on the part of those in the lower room against those in the higher, no contemptuous superiority of those in the higher over those in the lower. We shall need to carry that deep-going respect for the common divinely-informed and divinely-redeemed humanity in each of us over into the new world which is being shaped on a basis of closer political and social equality, of more equal opportunity and status. But we shall neither take it with us into that new world nor keep it there if we lose or undervalue the spirit of worship. Without that spirit the new world will be only a more open arena for the play of the tiger within us.

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